1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

its own grub and this principle is rigidly adhered to in summer, when the people live in Lower Post within easy contact of the stores. In winter, however, shortages of grub frequently arise and a family often has to be assisted until it has accumulated sufficient fur to undertake a journey to the trading post to restock depleted supplies.

Periods of hunger often occur among the Kaska. There are several reasons why this happens. A man sometimes errs in estimating his winter outfit. Often a minimal supply of grub must be shared with more unfortunate relatives. A man may also lack the money or credit to buy sufficient food. When any one or a combination of these conditions occur, and the family cannot kill sufficient meat to take the place of grub, acute and serious food shortage results. Hunger is never pleasant to the Indian, yet the average man and woman is able to accept temporary periods of food shortage without manifest alarm and overtly tends to minimize such experiences. Despite the anxiety concerning food, most people do not carefully ration their winter outfits. As a result, shortages are discovered only when the supply of a particular commodity is already almost exhausted.

A period of hunger was reported to have occurred in Old Man's settlement during the winter of 1939-40. All the grub had been eaten and there was no meat. Included in the several families living in this settlement at the time were Old Wiley, his wife, and children; they had not purchased a winter outfit. "They always had no grub. Old Wiley never trap," Old Man explained. "Girls, gee they tough; they strong. They didn't feel no hungry. They sing around, cut wood." After four days with scarcely any food, Old Man's son-in-law, Harry Lang, killed a dozen chickens, and then Old Man brought down nine more fowl. Everybody ate chicken. The following day Harry left again to hunt moose. He killed one moose but lost another. "I got one marten," Old Man related. "I got seven skin that time." He took the marten and traveled to a white man's home twenty miles upriver. This white trapper gave Old Man "nearly two hundred pound grub for one marten. Here it is, we come back with load of grub. Here it is, they all left. They went to Excited Lake. We got to Excited Lake. Everybody hungry." The people had already consumed the whole of Harry's moose. "We come in with grub. I think it last about three days." In March, Harry took Old Man's skins to Lower Post from where he returned with a sledful of grub.

Associated with the familiarity of hunger is the fact that people are always ready to accept food. A gift of food is recognized as one of the most important presents. In children the desire for food shows itself starkly, being as yet unmodified by socially patterned inhibitions on emotional expression. Young boys entering the ethnographer's home and seeing his children eating stared avidly and sometimes snatched at leftovers which were abandoned on the plates.

For most of the Indians the ideal diet consists of a balance between meat and grub. These need not necessarily appear together at every meal but some meat in the course of a day is regarded as indispensable. Either a diet of straight meat without grub or straight grub without meat is regarded as unfortunate. Not only is a straight grub diet less appetizing, but people are aware that reliance on such food causes staples to diminish rapidly and therefore increases the danger of running short. Living on straight grub also involves a greater expense; meat is free, but grub must be purchased at relatively high prices. Only one or two old women, like Mrs. Man, are content with a straight meat diet accompanied by little more

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

married or single.[9] Such a description represents the aboriginal pattern of Dease River social organization. Each band recognized a "chief,"[10] or leader, who guided the people in hunting. Outstanding in his ability to secure game, a headman was also always a rich man. Sometimes as many as seven families comprised his following. As a headman aged and became incapacitated, he relinquished his role in favor of a son or brother whose duties included caring for the retired leader.

All the Dease River Indians were divided into two moieties, taitli ("sides"), the Wolf and Crow. The two sections represented exogamous units in which membership followed the matrilineal line. Potlaches promoted interaction between the divisions, the members of which also prepared each other's dead for burial and competed in sports.[11]

Rich and poor men tended to stand out in the pre-contact community. The former represented able hunters who managed to secure large quantities of meat and skins. Such abundance attracted followers and dependents who accepted their patron's authority. Thus rich men also held positions of band leadership. The poor depended on the wealthy for food and skins. They made no return for such assistance. Sometimes a man became temporarily impoverished as a result of losing his hunting "luck." Help to such a man was advantageous because he would certainly remember the generosity when his fortunes turned. Poverty, as long as it did not stem from laziness, provided no bar to marriage, but a lazy man merited only laughter and jeers.[12]

[9] Allard, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* (1928), 24-25.

[10] When the Hudson's Bay Company entered the Cassiar, they appointed local chiefs to develop trapping. The word is derived from this period. The "company chief" was provided with a certain amount of regalia and received flour and tobacco to distribute to his "boys." Upon the Indians' arrival at the post the manager fired a gun to salute the executive. Prior to this period, informants agreed, no comparable leader existed among the Dease River people.

[11] Teit reports a more complex social system for the adjoining Tahltan. "Their social organization appears to be based largely on that obtaining among the Tlingit. Like the latter, they are divided into two exogamous phratries called Wolf and Raven (as in the case of the Kaska, the former is more important and is said to represent the original Tahltan people). Children belong to the phratry and clan of their mother. Each phratry consists of three clans or gentes, each of which has a hereditary chief and a territory of its own. These six chiefs form the governing body of the tribe. The clans do not have special totems, nor traditions deriving their origin from mythological ancestors. Crests and totems usually belong to the phratry. A seventh clan exists at the present day, having originated about 150 years ago through immigration of and intermarriage with the Tlingit. It belongs to the Wolf phratry, but has no recognized territory nor chief within the country of the Tahltans; it is called by its Tlingit name. There is an aristocracy of rank and wealth, but these nobles have no special rights in hunting grounds, fisheries, etc. Methods of obtaining rank, the potlatch, and many of the social and ceremonial customs of the tribe are closely adopted from the Tlingit." (Teit, *On Tahltan (Athabaskan) Work* [1912], 484-485. See also Jenness, *Indians of Canada* [1932], 373.) Mrs. William Strong, of Vancouver and Telegraph Creek, B. C., loaned the present writer several photographs of a Tahltan potlatch held in relatively recent times. These showed men wearing dark cloth robes embroidered with what appeared to be crest figures and very similar to the robes often illustrated for the Northwest Coast.

In Lower Post we learned of only two exogamous moieties among the Tahltan, the Wolf and Crow. Teit's description of clans with territorial rights does not sound convincing and may refer to local divisions in the Tahltan nation.

[12] Slaves were reported for the Tahltan where one "chief," Makunka, is said to have held 22 captive workers. These hunted and fished for their master and were well treated. (Personal communication from